NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

THE bulletin

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May 2006

Up Front from the President

Change 'they' say is the only thing that is constant. And there is no other area that seems to have to accommodate change more than the K-12 education system. Changes also, because they are not all introduced at once, can appear slow. However, even with sporadically introduced change we can, before we know it, find ourselves overwhelmed with all the 'wonderful' innovations imposed upon us.

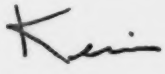
We can only guess, I suspect, at what caused the floodgates to open but change really began pouring into our teaching lives somewhere in the mid 1990s. Maybe it was the loss of the 2% savings clause that allowed government to take teachers from the system much faster than anything experienced prior to that time. Maybe it was the dismantling of the denominational education system that forced open doors that, up to that point, had kept the forces of change at bay. Maybe it was the new respect for individual rights and the resulting fallout from the introduction of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms that gave permission to parents to demand change.

Either way, change certainly, like Yosemite Sam on a rampage, came at us with both barrels blazing.

Earlier changes involved consolidating school boards – from 27 down to 11 and now down to 5. We went from 472 schools in 1995-96 to 326 in 2002-03 with more taken away since. District level administrators went from 194 in 1996 to 90 in 2003. In approximately the same time, the teaching force had declined by more than 1,500 teachers. As a result, a great deal of administrative work was passed down to the school and to the classroom. And those left in the system had to, for the most part, carry the same load as if all the administrators and teachers previously employed were still there.

As well, it was at this time that the Pathways framework was introduced. Even though teachers philosophically supported the intent of Pathways, they had major problems with the resources made available to allow it to work properly. Both classroom and special education teachers were reporting they were being overpowered, both physically and mentally, by the requirements of the ISSP process. Teachers also reported that workload and preparation time were seriously impacted as they tried to modify or develop alternate resources or programs and the process made impossible demands and simply set them up for failure. A Pathways Working Group was established and NLTA put together a brief for presentation to all stakeholders in the hope of addressing these very serious issues. Although some progress was made, the problems surrounding Pathways were far from solved.

We kept pressing the workload issue and the damage it was doing to our membership and to our students at every opportunity. Now, finally, with the support of the NLTA commissioned study by Dr. David Dibbon and the thesis of Dr. Lynda Younghusband it appears that somebody has gotten the message. In addition to keeping the 151 teachers that would otherwise have been removed government has agreed to set aside $250,000 to review the Teacher Allocation Model and $150,000 to fund a review of the process associated with the Pathways Model. At this point in time these initiatives may not do a lot to lessen our workload or do much to reduce stress levels, but they certainly indicate that somebody is listening. They also provide us with hope that the truth of what we have been saying will be seen and new resources will be added so that we are not automatically set up for failure. We can only hope for our sake and for the sake of the thousands of students we are responsible for, that this is indeed the case.



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COMMENTARY ON SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION – PROPOSED ARTICLE 29:07

LET ME GET RIGHT TO THE POINT. Article 29:07, as proposed by the employer in this round of collective bargaining, will increase the workload and stress of teachers like no other article before it. A simple change of one word will alter the face of teaching in Newfoundland and Labrador. A couple billion may comfort many; however, Article 29:07 (if accepted in the second round of negotiations) will open a hole in the collective agreement so large that working teachers will become the pedagogical pawns of our educational system.

Current Article 29:07 reads: *a teacher's participation on a school-based or board-based committee requires that teacher's* ***consent.***

Proposed Article 29:07 reads: *a teacher's participation on a school-based or school board committee requires* ***consultation*** *with that teacher.*

Change "**consent**" to "**consult**" and watch your family life disappear, your workload double, and the daily stress of the school day take its insidious toll. Words like "**consult**" are not insular; they are open to interpretation and misuse. Even the present unambiguous "**consent**" has, on several occasions, challenged our Association to protect members. What can we expect from "consult"?

Furthermore, define if you can… "*a school-based or board-based committee*". The dictionary defines committee as "*a group of persons appointed or elected to perform certain duties*". Even the youngest among us can conjure up a list of thirty duties that are not currently dictated or mandatory… and yes, we may desire to do many of them, but add "consult", then dictated and mandatory become an administrative responsibility and right. For example: "Ah, Mrs. Smith and Mr. White, I am consulting with you to let you know that you are the teacher representatives for the Student Council Committee and by the way, Ms. Jones you are the school representative on the District Math Curriculum Committee. There will be no debate… consultation is complete. You have no recourse.

Fellow teachers, despite the two billion dollar (owed) windfall and the near 6% raise, you must now stand up for your profession and your health. Strike the proposed Article 29:07 from this and any future agreement. Three letters could change the essence of your profession. Don't let it happen.

Herb Hopkins
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Editor's Note: *Article 29:07 is under discussion in the current round of negotiations and all indications are the author's concerns will be adequately addressed by your negotiating team's efforts.*

Important Information

The Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association are doing our part to help accommodate those who are sensitive to fragrances and other scented products.

We ask that you do yours by not wearing perfume, aftershave, cologne, hair spray, scented creams or lotions, or other scented products while visiting our building.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Be Aware of the Air We Share!

A message from the Occupational Health and Safety Committe of the NLTA,
3 Kenmount Road, St. John's, NL A1B 1W1

PROVINCIAL/NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL

NEWS

UPPER GULLIES

Active Living... at Upper Gullies Elementary

Are schools engineered for healthy physical activity? "Issues on childhood inactivity have been highlighted and demand our action," says Colleen Hogan, Physical Education teacher at Upper Gullies Elementary. "There are opportunities within the school day to foster healthy activity. Rather than discuss suggestions, I will describe the 'healthy activity' at Upper Gullies Elementary; there are many instances of *walking the talk*."

Recess and lunchtime at Upper Gullies Elementary are declared 'out days' when the weather is fine; they are 'optional' if the weather is challenging (cold) – those who want to play outside can choose to do so. Teachers on supervision come prepared toting snow pants if necessary. I can't help but notice the line of students at the exit eager for activity. Even in winter they are there with slides in hand.

In Physical Education classes, we took a wintry week and played outside – much laughter was heard among the active ranks as they went sliding to their hearts content. Ms. Scott enthusiastically accompanied me with her class, enjoying the winter fun, rather than the prep period. During Education Week, classroom teachers signed up for additional activity on the slopes. Ms. Howse took it a step further and led her students on a walk in the nearby wooded area where they built snow shelters and then she read them a survival story. What a Language Arts lesson!

Mr. Coates taught his Grade 6 classes lessons on an active winter lifestyle and survival, and then they went on such a day trip. Mme. Butler and her class made mini snow sculptures. Language development, lifestyle skills, cultural immersion – new and enriched meaning was given to achieving the outcomes. The Chinese proverb is more than true: "Tell me and I forget. Show me and I remember. Involve me and I understand."

Are schools engineered (physically and mindset) for the physical activity needs of youth? Above are examples of simple ways to do this. It also occurs when Mr. Baggs supervises a gym shoot around at recess time (not an assigned supervision) and when Ms. Pelley's Grade 1 class paired with a Grade 6 Health class in the Learning Resource Centre; students sat or lay on the floor or sat at tables (their choice) so they could be comfortable doing the lesson. Recent research suggests classes get rid of desks; rather than students sitting in one spot, they could move to work – standing, lying down, leaning against the wall, rather than just reaching under the desk to pick up materials.

Whose school is it, anyhow?

Students at Upper Gullies Elementary enjoy some outdoor activities.

MANUELS

Reading rocks at St. George's Elementary

St. George's Elementary in Manuels held it's fourth annual reading relay in March. This day is put aside every year to celebrate books and the joy of reading. The event consists of two parts: individual reading upon receiving the relay lantern that is moving throughout the school, and shared reading sessions where students are read to by special invited guests. The "Share the Light" name also has two meanings – the literal sharing of the relay lantern, and the spreading of enthusiasm/joy that books can bring to our lives. Many members of the school community

also drop in during the day to help "share the light!" This year's theme was *Reading Rocks* and students used their imaginations and creativity to dress to the theme. Dr. Darin King, Director of the Eastern School District, was on hand to officially light the relay lantern at the morning kick-off assembly.

Students at St. George's Elementary enjoy a shared reading session.

NATUASHISH, LABRADOR

Good things are happening at Mushuau Innu Natuashish School

On April 7, 2006, Mushuau Innu Natuashish School held its second annual Science Fair. Each class submitted one science project apiece, bringing the total to 17. Competition was split into three categories determined by age group: Primary, Elementary, and High School.

The Primary category included: Kindergarten (Making Mould); Primary POD A (Why Do Boats Sink?); Primary POD B (Volcanoes Sleep Then They Pop!); Primary POD C (Making Easter Eggs); Primary POD D (Mixing Solids and Liquids); Primary POD E (Earth Watch); and Primary POD F (Magnetic Power).

The Elementary category included: Elementary POD A (The Solar System); Elementary POD B (Dancing Molecules); Elementary POD C (Liquid Rainbow); Elementary POD D (Magnetic Attraction); Elementary POD E (What is an Electric Current?); and Elementary POD F (Our Solar System).

The High School category included: Junior High POD A (The Penny and Card Trick); Junior High POD B (Solidification of Water and the Particle Theory); Junior High POD C (Stalactites and Stalagmites); and Level I/II (How Will Temperature Affect the Performance of Yeast?).

The winning entries were:

• Primary – Ms. Annette Manuel's POD F entry, *Magnetic Power*. Ms. Manuel's class discovered if there was any correlation between a magnet's size and its strength.

• Elementary – Mr. Slaney's POD B entry, *Dancing Molecules*. Using food colouring and various samples of water at varying temperatures, Mr. Slaney's class showed how water molecules will move faster the warmer they get.

• High School – Mr. Bixby's Level I/II entry, *How will Temperature Affect the Performance of Yeast?*. Mr. Bixby's class tried to determine at which temperature the growth and multiplication of yeast cells would be most optimal.

In attendance were several parents, as well as Mr. Desmond Sellars, Director of Science Curriculum for the Labrador School Board. Mr. Sellars was one of the judges for the competition, along with Ms. Jackie Williams, the school's vice-principal.

Mr. Desmond Sellars, Director of Science Curriculum for the Labrador School Board, speaks with students about their Science Fair entries.

There were many positive comments from all those exposed to the Fair. Mr. Sellars considered this year's Fair to be a marked improvement over last year's pioneering event. Hopefully, this trend will continue into the foreseeable future.

Currently, this is the only Science Fair in existence within the school district of Labrador.

Luck of the Irish Contest Winner

The winner of the "Luck of the Irish" Bulletin Contest which ran in the March issue of *The Bulletin* is:

Madonna Boone, Hillside Elementary, La Scie

The shamrock was found on page 13 of the March issue, and the leprechaun was found on page 32 (back cover) of the online issue.

Madonna's name was chosen in a random draw by NLTA President, Kevin Foley. Madonna wins an NLTA surprise package. Congratulations Madonna!

ST. JOHN'S

Presentation made to NLTA Christmas Card Contest winner

On April 11, Lydia Halley, a Grade 4 student at Macdonald Drive Elementary School in St. John's, was presented with a framed copy of her winning design for the 2006 NLTA Christmas Card Contest. NLTA President, Kevin Foley, presented Lydia with her award-winning design at a school assembly attended by students, teachers and parents.

Lydia's design will be featured on the NLTA Christmas card that will be sent to schools, businesses and other groups in December 2006. Lydia also received a $100 cash award for her winning entry.

NLTA President Kevin Foley presents Lydia Halley with a framed copy of her winning design for the 2006 NLTA Christmas Card Contest.

NEWFOUNDLAND & LABRADOR

WISE-NL provides young women with work experience

Established in 1988, WISE (Women in Science and Engineering) is a not-for-profit, voluntary network working to promote and support women in science, engineering and related careers.

The WISE-SSEP (Student Summer Employment Program) provides female high school students with full-time paid work and hands-on exposure to science and engineering fields. The program builds self-confidence and shows that these careers can be interesting and rewarding.

More than 500 young women across the province have participated in WISE-SSEP. They have worked in a variety of settings, including MUN's Faculties of Science, Engineering and Applied Science, and Medicine. Three young women share their 2005 summer work experiences here.

Heidi Warr, of Robert's Arm, worked in Human Survival Studies, Institute for Ocean Technology (IOT). "While working at the IOT I learned new research skills, including how to search for information on the Net more effectively, and gained valuable hands-on to help me choose my future career. I took part in meetings and learned how to use new computer software. I would never have had such exposure to jobs in engineering and science without WISE."

Heidi Wells, from Grand Falls-Windsor, worked in MUN's Department of Psychology. "This summer I worked with professors and students focusing on the area of behavioural neuroscience, deriving information from rat brains in order to understand the structures, and functions of these structures. My research involved the hippocampus, a structure in the brain that plays an important part in memory and navigation. I learned many valuable lab skills and other interesting information."

Ashley Dobbin, of Mount Pearl, worked in MUN's Department of Chemistry. "Like many of the WISE girls, I came into this job not knowing anything about computers or spectroscopy. This is a branch of science that looks at chemical composition of substances by studying how they absorb light. I worked on how absorption changes in iron solutions. This could correlate with their future study of how lead absorbs into the skin. I couldn't ask for a better way to experience my first job!"

WISE-NL is grateful for program support offered by HRDC, the NSERC/Petro-Canada Chair for Women in Science and Engineering – Atlantic Region, NSERC, Technip Offshore Canada Limited, and Memorial University of Newfoundland.

To learn more, please go to www.cdli.ca/wise/.

CEC Outstanding Achievement Award Call for Nominations

The Newfoundland and Labrador Council for Exceptional Children shares the mission of international CEC – promoting excellence in educational and community services for children with special needs and their families through increased awareness and professional development. The CEC in Newfoundland and Labrador enjoys representation at the national and international level and has a strong history of service in this province.

In keeping with this goal, the CEC in Newfoundland and Labrador are pleased to call for nominations for the third annual Outstanding Achievement Award. This award is designed to acknowledge: outstanding contribution to the well-

being of exceptional children and youth; innovation of teaching strategies; dedication to the integration of exceptional children; dedication to the creation of positive learning environments; and an ability to inspire students and co-workers. The award is designed to acknowledge the calibre of excellence for which our province is strongly recognized with regard to services for children with exceptionalities.

People/agencies who are interested in nominating a local practitioner are asked to complete the Nomination Form articulating why they feel the nominee meets the above criteria. Each nomination will need to be accompanied by three confidential Letters of Support. All nominations will be reviewed by a committee appointed by the CEC Executive.

The Nomination Form and three Letters of Support must be returned to the CEC by the May 31, 2006 deadline for submission.

For further information and/or to receive a copy of the nomination form, contact: Mr. David Philpott, Faculty of Education, Memorial University of Newfoundland, Tel: 709-737-3506; Fax: 709-737-2345; philpott@mun.ca.

The recipient of the award will be celebrated in a social event early in Autumn 2006.

CANADA

Youth Guide to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms

The John Humphrey Centre for Peace and Human Rights has available a bilingual *Youth Guide to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* which is now available on their website: www.johnhumphrey-centre.org/guide.htm.

The Youth Guide is aimed at youth, 12-16 years of age, and uses age appropriate language and winning youth art to illustrate the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The Guide has received extremely positive reviews by educators, policy makers and youth.

The creators of the youth guide believe that an educated youth will take an active interest in their heritage and the rights and freedoms that come with being a Canadian citizen.

To receive hard copies of the resource contact Carrie Malloy, Education Coordinator, John Humphrey Centre for Peace and Human Rights, 404A, 10310-102 Avenue, Edmonton, AB, T5J 2X6, Tel: 780-453-2638; Fax: 780-454-1519; clmalloy@telus.net.

CTF designates May 15 as National Fundraising Count Day

The Canadian Teachers' Federation, in cooperation with the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA) and the Fédération des syndicats de l'enseignement based in Quebec, conducted a national survey to collect hard data on a range of school commercialism activities in Canadian elementary and secondary publicly funded schools.

The full report was scheduled to be presented at the CTF Board of Directors meeting in April. The preliminary findings were released at the CTF Annual General Meeting in July 2005 and because the data was so rich and massive, additional time was required to fully mine the results.

As a follow-up activity to the release of the findings, CTF has designated May 15, 2006 as "National Fundraising Count Day" in schools across Canada. Teachers and principals are encouraged to take an audit of fundraising in their schools using a worksheet that CTF will post on its Web Portal Page. Teachers and principals are invited to talk around their respective schools to "take a snapshot" of the extent to which schools use fundraising to provide public education.

Teachers are encouraged to visit the CTF website, www.ctf-fce.ca to download materials in support of this activity.

Canada Post Literacy Awards Call for Nominations

The Canada Post Literacy Awards was first established in 1993 to discover and acknowledge the achievements of Canadians who have made a special effort or an important contribution to literacy. Besides individual Awards, Community Leadership and Business Leadership Awards, there is also an Education Award that honors English- and French-speaking educators, tutors and advocates who have demonstrated a commitment to the cause of literacy or teaching ESL/FSL. Educators who support literacy or ESL/FSL training by developing initiatives or teaching skills, or by otherwise working within their communities to improve reading and writing skills in either of Canada's official languages, are eligible for nomination.

Nominations for the 2006 Canada Post Literacy Awards will be accepted until May 26, 2006. Prizes and awards will be presented at special ceremonies that will take place across the country in the fall. Winners are invited to attend the ceremony in their province or territory to receive their award. Canada Post covers the cost of travel and accommodations for each winner and his or her guest for the event.

For nomination forms and further information, go to www.canadapost.ca/literacy awards.

A national campaign to counteract obesity

From March 13 to May 31, four organizations: The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, the National Film Board of Canada, the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada and the Canadian Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance (CAHPERD) are inviting Canadians to join the fight against obesity. The Weight of the World Challenge is a national campaign to counteract obesity. From a new interactive website, a package that aims to generate awareness about nutrition and fitness, is being offered, free of charge to schools, community groups, libraries and families. The package includes the NFB/CBC film, *The Weight of the World* and special user guides. The film can be ordered and the guides downloaded at www.cbc.ca/weightoftheworld from anywhere in Canada until May 31, 2006.

NORTH AMERICA

Taking on child obesity, one sticker at a time

A Canadian entrepreneur has created a fun, new way for children to help themselves in the fight against obesity. Robert Zyluk's *Produce Passport* book was recently launched on the Internet at www.producepassport.com.

The *Produce Passport* is a colorful sticker book, shaped like a real passport, allowing children to collect UPC stickers from fruits and vegetables as a way to track how much they've eaten. From plums to pomegranates, peppers to papayas, there are 21 different items featured in each Passport. Children simply take the UPC sticker from the fruit/veggie they've eaten and stick it into their book. The Passport also features fun facts, puzzles, games, and brief descriptions of each fruit and veggie.

There are two passports; one for children under the age of seven, and one for children seven and older.

For more information, contact Robert Zyluk, Tel: 204-770-7607, innovativepromotions@shaw.ca, www.producepassport.com.

JACOB HILL, 1960 – 2005

On June 26, 2005, family, friends, colleagues and students at James Cook Memorial were shocked and deeply saddened by the sudden death of Jacob Hill.

Jacob was born in Gunner's Cove on the Northern Peninsula. In 1988 he graduated from Memorial University with a Bachelor of Education. As a professional teacher, Jacob worked for 21 years serving communities of the Northern Peninsula as well as Williams Harbour in Labrador. It was in Williams Harbour that he met the love of his life, Clara. In the following years they added daughter, Laura Marie, and son, Jacob, to their family. Laura Marie graduates in June 2006 from Bayview Collegiate at the age of 17 and hopes to study medicine. Their son, Jacob, is in Grade 10.

At the age of 12, Jacob was diagnosed with Juvenile (Type I) Diabetes. Kidney problems began while in university and he had a kidney transplant in 1987, donated by his 19-year-old sister. This new lease on life with a new kidney lasted 17 years for Jacob, and for the past two years he was on home dialysis.

Over the years, all the staff of James Cook Memorial was privileged to have known and worked with Jacob. His warmth, humor, and enthusiasm were an inspiration to us all. He was a superb teacher who was giving, caring, kind and compassionate.

Jacob took on his illness like a hero. He never complained about his critical illness. Time meant nothing to Jacob – life went on. He took an interest in everything and everybody and seemed to savour everything, whether it was a walk in the country, attending his garden or raising a few turkeys for Thanksgiving.

To live life with his illness and to drive over 60 km, one way, to work at James Cook Memorial each day, Jacob Hill was certainly a match for any man.

Jacob is deeply missed by his wife Clara, son Jacob, daughter Laura Marie, and a large circle of family and friends.

(Submitted by Wayne Abbott on behalf of family, friends and colleagues.)

HEATHER MCDONALD, 1977 – 2005

Heather McDonald – beloved daughter, cherished fiancée, older sister, dear friend, devoted music educator, mentor, valued Member of the Board of Directors of the CMEA/ACEM, sunchaser. Her passions included music, her students, her friends, her family, and her profession. Her vision and commitment, while consistently focused in her home community and province, spread from Deer Lake to Bay Roberts, across Newfoundland and Labrador, and throughout Canada. In December, family, friends, students, and colleagues gathered to celebrate her life and work through music and words.

Her friend, Noreen Greene-Fraize, wrote: "What does one say about a friend? Heather was a bundle of energy, with a twinkle in her eye and a smile on her face. Her joy was infectious". Her principal, Philip Wood, said: "Heather deeply loved children and always encouraged them to do their ultimate best. Her devotion to her students and her craft was passed on to her students, who participated enthusiastically in rehearsals, concerts, trips, and other activities". One of her students added: "She gave me my voice – I mean she literally helped me find my deep male voice".

As President of the Newfoundland-Labrador Music Educators' Association from September 2004 until December 16, 2005, Heather represented the interests of music educators in the province. She quietly offered advice and wisdom to other provincial presidents during her service as Member of the Board of Directors of CMEA/ACEM.

On May 28, 2006, the Eastern School District Band from St. John's, Newfoundland, under the direction of Douglas Vaughan, will dedicate two pieces to Heather. *Sunchasers* by Roland Barrett, describes, through rhythmic energy, soaring melody, and a gorgeous lyrical selection, those who energize others through their vision and work.

Heather, your life is resounding as you continue to chase the sun.

(Excerpt from CMEA/ACEM tribute by Past President, Dr. Barbara Graham.)

Jacob Hill

Heather McDonald

Plan Ahead and Register Early

Pre-Retirement Seminars

by DON ASH

Teachers within two years of retirement eligibility should register for one of the NLTA's seven Pre-Retirement Seminars being held in the fall of 2006 in Stephenville, Corner Brook, Gander, Grand Falls-Windsor, and three in St. John's. These seminars are held in accordance with Association policy as part of its overall program of pre-retirement counselling. Clause 18.12 of the Provincial Collective Agreement and Clause 29.12 of the Labrador West Collective Agreement provide two days paid leave to attend these seminars.

Information sessions will deal with topics such as the Teachers' Pension Plan, Severance Pay, Employment Insurance, NLTA Group Insurance, Financial and Estate Planning and the Canada Pension Plan. As well, time is available for individual counselling of prospective retirees by the various consultants.

NOTE: The full text of the NLTA Policy on Pre-Retirement Seminars and the application form can be found on the NLTA website (www.nlta.nl.ca). A link on the main page called "Forms Online" will bring you to the applicable form and policy. The NLTA policy will also be mailed to teachers with confirmation of registration.

Things You Should Know About Attending

• Potential participants must register for a particular seminar and apply to their District for leave.

• Only those teachers eligible to retire during or before June 2009 will be eligible to attend.

• Registration must be received at the NLTA Office at least four weeks in advance to ensure approval of attendance.

• The Association reserves the right to refuse acceptance of registration forms at any particular seminar if the registration has not been received at the NLTA office in accordance with Association policy.

• It is the responsibility of the individual participant to make arrangements for hotel accommodations, should any be required. Please reference that you are attending an NLTA function and this should provide a reduced rate which is available to persons travelling on Association related business.

• Travel expenses shall be reimbursed in accordance with the following provisions:

i) participants shall be reimbursed the lesser of travel by private vehicle or public transportation to the seminar closest to the place of residence. In the event that a teacher requests and is accepted to attend a seminar other than the closest seminar, the participant shall only be reimbursed the amount applicable for travel to the closest seminar.

ii) payment for travel in a private vehicle shall be at the rate of 12¢ per kilometre for the return trip from residence to seminar site.

iii) travel via public transportation will be reimbursed at the rate of 80 percent of ferry, taxi, or economy airfare; in the case of airfare, the lesser of excursion (seat sale) or 80 percent of economy airfare will be paid, where excursion (seat sale) fares can be arranged. Receipts shall be required for all reimbursement.

iv) no expenses will be paid to participants living or teaching in the community where the seminar is held.

v) a spouse is welcome to accompany the participating teacher to the pre-retirement seminar, but no expenses will be covered.

• All other expenses, such as meals, accommodation and child care, are the responsibility of the participating teacher.

• Expenses will be provided for one pre-retirement seminar only and a teacher participant shall be permitted to attend one seminar only. (Notwithstanding this, a teacher may attend a second seminar as a spouse.)

• Teachers must attend the seminar location closest to their place of residence, except in cases where the mode, cost or availability of transportation necessitates otherwise.

• Directors and Assistant Directors, and spouses, are welcome to attend one pre-retirement seminar, but no expenses will be paid in accordance with this policy.

Given the increasing numbers of teachers eligible to retire, we reserve the right to limit the number of people who will be granted access, depending on the physical facilities available at each site. Consequently, **it is imperative that teachers plan ahead and register early in the event that registrations have to be taken on a first-come, first-served basis.**

2006 Pre-Retirement Seminar

REGISTRATION FORM

Name .....

.....

Home Address .....

.....

.....

.....

Postal Code .....

Home Telephone .....

Social Insurance Number .....

School Name .....

.....

.....

School Telephone .....

Please check which session you will be attending:

- ☐ **Oct. 12-13** – Hotel Gander, Gander
- ☐ **Oct. 19-20** – Holiday Inn, Stephenville
- ☐ **Oct. 26-27** – Mt. Peyton, Grand Falls-Windsor
- ☐ **Nov. 2-3** – Holiday Inn, St. John's
- ☐ **Nov. 9-10** – Greenwood Inn, Corner Brook
- ☐ **Nov. 30 - Dec. 1** – Holiday Inn, St. John's
- ☐ **Dec. 7-8** – Holiday Inn, St. John's

Will your spouse be attending? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Name of spouse (if attending) .....

.....

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Have you attended a previous pre-retirement seminar?

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Note:

- Teachers within two years of retirement (on or before June 2009) are eligible to attend.
- All participants must pre-register.
- You will receive confirmation prior to seminar.
- Travel costs will be paid according to policy and only to the nearest seminar.
- Teachers are advised to bring a calculator.

Please submit registration form to:

Melanie Jaster
Benefits and Economic Services Division,
Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association
3 Kenmount Road, St. John's, NL A1B 1W1
Fax: 709-726-4302; 1-877-711-6582 (*toll free*)

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Transfers Requests
"Reasonable Effort"

by PERRY DOWNEY

On March 21, the Minister of Education, the Honourable Joan Burke, and the President of the NLTA, Kevin Foley, held a news conference at the NLTA building to announce that there will not be any reductions in teacher allocations for the 2006-07 school year. During this news conference, the Minister announced that 151 teaching units will be retained in the system for the 2006-07 school year that could have been removed as a result of declining enrolments and the current Teacher Allocation Formula. Given that the main purpose for retaining these 151 units is to address the serious workloads of teachers, the Association is anticipating that school boards will be hiring additional teachers to fill vacancies that occur because of teacher retirements. As a result, there should be vacancies available for teachers throughout the various school districts to transfer to if they wish to do so.

Teachers often consider transfers for a variety of reasons. Some consider a transfer as: i) an advancement towards a greater goal; ii) an opportunity to occupy a more desirable position; or, iii) an opportunity to get closer to home. Others consider a transfer simply as a "change". As the saying goes, "a change is sometimes as good as a rest". However, as is all too familiar, teaching today, with its endless demands and expectations, is definitely no "rest", no matter which position we choose to occupy.

While School Boards are determining their vacancies for the next school year and are internally posting the various positions within the schools throughout their District, many teachers are reviewing and updating their resumés, preparing to apply for various transfer positions. Teachers should ensure that their educational qualifications are updated, especially if they have changed in recent years, as well as ensuring that their experiences and teaching responsibilities are up-to-date before submitting an application to School Board officials indicating their desire to be considered for vacant positions during the transfer process.

As the process begins, it is also very common for teachers to contact the Benefits and Economic Services (BES) Division of the NLTA. Teachers who contact our Division often question whether or not the Administrative Staff are aware of the qualities and/or characteristics School Board officials will be considering as they review applications from candidates seeking transfers. Teachers often ask the question: "What does it mean that a School Board is supposed to make a 'reasonable effort' to accommodate requests from teachers already employed with the Board in a continuing contract?" This is often a very difficult question to answer conclusively since it depends on a number of factors. However, over the years, the meaning of this phrase has been clarified by Arbitration Boards.

The phrase "reasonable effort" appears in both the Provincial (PCA) and Labrador West Collective Agreements (LWCA) in Clause 6.12(a) and Clause 42.07(a), respectfully. It is these clauses which must be specifically considered by School Board officials when they are reviewing transfer applications. In addition to Clause 6.12(a), School Board officials must also consider Clause 13.01 (PCA) or Clause 44.02 (LWCA).

Clause 6.12 (a) [Clause 42.07] states: *In filling vacant positions in accordance with Clause 6.03, the Board shall: make a reasonable effort to accommodate requests from teachers already employed with the Board in a continuing contract.*

Clause 13.01 [Clause 44.02] states: *A teacher may be transferred to a comparable position within the same community when it is deemed necessary but shall not be transferred from one community to another without the teacher's consent.*

In an Arbitration ruling in the fall of 2004, the Arbitrator stated that there are "some general principles by which reasonable effort is to be tested". These general principles were first set out in an Arbitration ruling in 1987 and were reiterated again in the more recent ruling. In both decisions, the arbitrators cited the following as some general principles by which "reasonable effort" is to be tested.

1. An applicant who is requesting a transfer to an advertised vacant position must receive bona fide consideration. If such applicant meets the stated qualifications for the position, that consideration should include a personal interview.

2. The selection of an outside applicant (or of one transfer applicant over another) must not be arbitrary nor based on criteria other than those of Clause 6.03. (Note: Clause 6.03 [Clause 42.05 – LWCA] states: *The basic criteria for the selection of teachers shall be competence, suitability and qualifications as assessed by the School Board.*).
3. A transfer request must not be denied simply because the Employer wishes to keep the teacher in his/her present position.
4. "Reasonable effort" to accommodate a transfer request does not mean to unreasonably deny another applicant the right to become a candidate for a publicly advertised position (under Clause 8.01), or to be assessed in accordance with Clause 6.03.

For the most part, School Board officials do comply with these principles during the transfer process; however, the BES Division often receives calls from individual teachers who have concerns because they have not been successful during the transfer round. There are many different reasons given why an individual was not successful; however, sometimes the reason provided centers around #3 above. Teachers are sometimes told by School Board officials that the reason they were not granted a transfer was because the School Board felt it would have difficulty "back-filling" the position that would be vacated had they allowed the transfer to occur. This reason is often given to teachers who occupy specialty positions such as Special Education, Core French or French Immersion, guidance, or sciences and mathematics, just to mention a few. Teachers who teach in rural and/or isolated regions of the province are also sometimes given this reason. If any teacher is unsuccessful during the transfer process and upon inquiry to School Board officials is told specifically that the reason why he/she was unsuccessful during the transfer process was because the Board felt it would have difficulty "back-filling" his/her position, he/she should contact an Administrative Officer in the BES Division of the NLTA to discuss his/her particular circumstances and the options that are available. It is important to remember that if you wish to formally challenge a decision of the School Board through the grievance process as outlined in the Collective Agreement, or any other decision of the School Board where you believe you did not receive "bona fide consideration", you must "submit the grievance in writing to the Director within ten (10) calendar days of the occurrence or discovery of the incident giving rise to the grievance ..." (PCA – Clause 31.02/ LWCA – Clause 50.03). It is always the desire of the NLTA Administrative Staff to resolve disputes between teachers and their respective School Board without having to engage in the grievance process; however, if an issue cannot be resolved, the teacher(s) would maintain the right to file a grievance and to challenge the decision of the Board through the grievance process. In most cases, the decision to proceed with a grievance is made in consultation with one of the Administrative Staff Officers in BES.

With the larger school boards and the recent announcement by the Minister of Education to retain 151 teaching units, we do anticipate that there will be opportunities for teachers to transfer to vacant positions. However, transfers can only be considered after the redundancy/reassignment process has been completed.

Clause 9.09 [Clause 47.05] states: *A School Board will not advertise any position or hire any teacher until it has made every effort to place those teachers who have been laid off or who have been notified in writing that they are to be laid off.*

As positions are advertised internally and externally, those teachers who are seeking transfers are encouraged to submit their applications to their respective Assistant Director of Human Resources or designate for consideration.

Perry Downey is an Administrative Officer in the Benefits and Economic Services Division of the NLTA.

Some Tips on Teacher Certification

by STEFANIE TUFF

Some teachers may finish their careers having dealt with the Teacher Certification Division of the Department of Education on only one occasion – that being when they made their initial application for a teaching certificate. However, many others are in contact with Teacher Certification personnel from time to time for various reasons, such as: certificate upgrading; allowance/bonus applications; credit for teaching service in other provinces; and, Review Panel hearings and appeals. The purpose of this article is to provide some basic information and advice for teachers facing issues that fall within the jurisdiction of Teacher Certification.

Once a person has been certified as a teacher, the most common reason for further contact with Teacher Certification officials is certificate upgrading. Under provincial legislation (the Teacher Training Act and Teacher Certification Regulations) the responsibility for approving or disapproving applications for upgrading rests with the Registrar of Teacher Certification, Mr. Robert Parsons. The Regulations set out the educational requirements for each level of certification and Mr. Parsons reviews each application and determines whether the requirements for the certificate level being sought have been met. All programs of study must be approved by the Registrar before they will be accepted for certification purposes. Therefore, it is extremely important that teachers who are planning to invest in further education in order to qualify for a higher level of teacher certification first check with Mr. Parsons' office to ensure that the program they are considering has been approved and complies with the Regulations.

Under Article 21.07 of the Provincial Collective Agreement (Article 23.06 of the Labrador West Collective Agreement), teachers can receive service credit, and the corresponding salary increments, for teaching service and for certain categories of work experience other than regular and substitute teaching in this province. However, this does not happen automatically. An application must be submitted to Teacher Certification, along with confirmation of the nature and duration of the work experience for which credit is being sought. Applications for transferring teaching service are available from the Teacher Certification office. Teacher Certification is also responsible for approving applications for the bonuses and allowances paid to department heads, guidance counselors, and specialist teachers.

The Registrar of Teacher Certification oversees the process by which teaching certificates may be suspended or canceled in certain cases. For example, the Teacher Training Act states that the certificate of a teacher who terminates his/her teaching contract without giving the proper notice set out in the Collective Agreement may be suspended for up to one year. These types of cases are heard by the Teacher Certification Review Panel and teachers are given an opportunity to present their case before a decision is made. The Registrar is not a member of the Review Panel but is responsible for arranging hearing dates and locations and for ensuring that all parties have received the necessary information and documentation for the proceedings. If a teacher's certificate is suspended or terminated by the Review Panel, the Registrar will notify the other provincial teacher certification authorities of this decision, which could impact on a teacher's status of or eligibility for certification in other Canadian jurisdictions.

Decisions of the Registrar on applications for initial certification or upgrading, and decisions of the Review Panel can be appealed within certain time limits. Mr. Parsons can be contacted at the Department of Education, P.O. Box 8700, St. John's, NL, A1B 4J6, by phone at (709) 729-3020, or by e-mail at robparsons@gov.nl.ca. Teachers who have concerns about a Teacher Certification issue are advised to contact an Administrative Officer in the Benefits and Economic Services Division.

Stefanie Tuff is an Administrative Officer in the Benefits and Economic Services Division of the NLTA.

Wellness Is a Grand Journey

by MARIE WALL

Achieving wellness is no small task. It takes effort, preparation, overcoming obstacles and enjoying the benefits. Whether it is getting fit, developing better communication or coming to peace with oneself and life, transforming old patterns into healthier ways of being is a challenge, and sometimes the inner terrain is hardest. In this article I will share an experience that encompassed all of this for me – an eight-day backpacking trip in the Grand Canyon.

I had never made such a journey, and never thought I could; yet with a combination of anticipation and fear I started the adventure. I had to prepare with the end in mind. If I wanted to be successful, I had to be ready. I could not do it alone, but I had an informal support team who encouraged me.

On the edge of the Grand Canyon.

The preparation took great effort. I knew I needed physical conditioning – better cardio, be stronger and lighter. To succeed I also needed the right equipment. The task seemed daunting, but I had four months to prepare. If I wanted to do this trek I had to be as ready as I could be. I had to walk, snowshoe, hike, eat right, and lose weight. I started walking and snowshoeing with my pack at 25 pounds, which I thought was very good. Little did I know that the pack would double in weight for the trek. Many times I doubted myself, but the dream remained. Slowly I got stronger and my pack got heavier. In a couple of months I could extend my day trips from one hour to nearly three. My goal was to be able to hike 10 km with a 40-pound pack.

The thought of being in the Grand Canyon for a week was frightening, but I was still driven. I gathered my equipment, new and old. I needed new boots, which was a big deal in itself as they needed to be broken in. I wore them whenever I could, including to work on casual Fridays. The mix of anticipation and fear was constant with both taking the upper hand at various times. I didn't know what was drawing me, but the excitement outweighed the fear.

Survival instincts kicked in – in a way I could never have anticipated. Food for the hike became an obsession. Would there be enough? What would it be? How do we carry it and how do we prepare it? My focus around the food created new fears. The needs of food were very specific – light, compact, transportable and nutritious. Once the initial food packing had been completed and I could see the amount of food we would carry, my comfort level increased dramatically. I still didn't know how we were going to carry it all, but I had to trust it would be okay.

The closer I got to leaving, the greater my anxiety became. I had never thought of myself as panicky, but the waves of anxiety that washed over me were more than I had ever experienced. Doubts were paramount. Was I ready? Did I have the right equipment? Would I feel trapped? Could I do it? I had to rely on my support team to reassure me in ways I had never experienced before. The anxiety crescendoed and I wasn't even there yet.

The preparation was done and now it was the moment of truth. I arrived at our destination – the South Rim of the Grand Canyon. The Grand Canyon is a huge hole in the middle of nowhere. As I looked over the abyss, I couldn't catch my breath – the beauty of it, my fear of it and the reality of what I was about to do. It was the most breathtaking experience of my life. There were nine people in our party – seven participants, all from Newfoundland, and

our two guides. Each stage of the trek was essential and the day at the Rim gave us time to share out the supplies and pack our bags. I couldn't imagine how it would all fit, and I was right. My backpack was insufficient and not the right one at all. Fear stricken and embarrassed, I had to admit this to one of the guides. The cool response was shocking to my system. The two of us drove to the local general store, fully outfitted with groceries, tourist shop and hiking gear, to purchase a new, bigger pack. I experienced only moderate relief.

Finally, with the equipment packed in my new shiny bag, I tried to settle in for a night's sleep. I was in a tent with four strangers, on the rim of a canyon that I was going into for eight days and I was supposed to sleep. I eventually drifted off but the fitful night only served to feed my anxiety even more.

With a few glitches we managed to get ourselves to the trail head. The packs were heavier than I could ever have imagined and now I had a new worry. Could I really carry this for eight days? The packs were so heavy, around 50 pounds, that we had to hoist them up for each other. The guide reassured us not to be ashamed about needing help to do this. Finally, we started out to an unknown world with unknown demands. Unlike my other hiking trips, day hikes, all my treks started at the bottom and I worked my way up. This trek started at the top and we began the long descent.

A side trip through Cottonwood Canyon.

The initial day was on a well-traveled path that was carved into the canyon wall. With one of the guides in the lead and one holding the rear. I decided to hang back. It seemed daunting enough for me without trying to set the pace. I also knew the weakest part of my body is my knees and getting down would be a huge test. The first hour seemed to pass quickly. The vistas were out of this world and each corner had a new view to take in. There were lots of fellow travelers, both ascending and descending; this was the entry to the canyon and a popular day hike.

We met a Ranger part way down that morning, "I hear the creaks of the new equipment," he quipped. I responded, "that is not all that is creaking." That first day was torturous, more internally than physically. I fought with myself every step of the way. The first step on the path instantaneously turned my anxiety into anger. Where was this coming from I asked? But asking the question was of no use or relief. The anger was definitely mine. I was angry with myself for getting me into this and I was afraid. I knew once the descent began it had to be completed. With each step I took, I angrily thought of all the other things I could have done for a holiday, all the places I could have gone with the money I was spending to do this. Fear and anger cursed through me as I descended into unknown depths. This internal struggle contrasted the light chatter amongst the crew, leaving me feeling inadequate. I assumed I was the only one who was doubtful and I was isolating myself by assuming everyone else was completely prepared physically and psychologically.

Late in the afternoon we turned from the main path and made our way to one less traveled. An hour later we pulled into camp, the exhaustion in my bones mixed with the exhalation of accomplishment. I had struggled the entire day. I fought with myself for having decided to do such a trek. But at the end of the first day I knew I was ready, I knew I could do this.

My bedroom that night was a flat patch of dessert shared with eight other people. The moonlit sky cast the most amazing shadows on the canyon walls. It was a fitful sleep and it worried me that I would not be rested for the next day's hike. I learned that the on again off again sleep was normal and enough rest was gained through the dusk to day bedtime.

The daily hikes were mostly uneventful. We would rest hourly and eat regularly. The terrain was surprising, hiking the plateau, with descents into a side canyon then ascent to the plateau. It was demanding. The vistas continued to be awesome, yet the immersion into the dessert beauty permeated my cells to the point where it felt 'normal', common even.

Night four we pulled into camp for a two-day rest. I was weary and the layover was welcomed. The opportunity to explore the terrain and enjoy the stream. That afternoon a rain shower came through and a quick attempt to rainproof our site was initiated. Preparation that night included trying to protect ourselves and our gear under the tarp. We were only somewhat successful.

Throughout the evening there were a few light showers but it was later that the real storm came. I was awakened from my sleep, cold and damp. The rain was torrential and I could watch the movement of the thick storm clouds. The rain came in waves

with short reprieves. I lay in the dark watching as each storm cloud came through our camp. My fear returned with a vengeance. I imagined the worst case scenarios – getting flooded out, having to trek for four days in the rain, getting stuck at this camp and not being able to get out. I felt I was going to die. Waves of panic washed through me. Deeper and deeper into my own distress – panic and despair. Until I let go! Lying there cold and afraid I thought, "and there is nothing I can do about that!" I surrendered. I knew I had to do the same thing in the Canyon I did to prepare – take it one step at a time.

The next morning when we set out from camp it was damp and chilly but it was a fine day for a long trek. My body warmed and my sense of ease overwhelmed me. I let go and took it one step at a time. There were no worries because "there was nothing I could do about that."

On day six we descended to the Colorado River. The blue-green waterway was huge, cold and loud, with the roar of Hance Rapids. The chilly rain showers followed us and we again had to sleep under the tarp. My dreams that night descended also. They reached into my psyche to teach me a lesson. I was a little girl being hugged and held. The love and security permeated every cell. I awoke feeling alive and knowing this is what life is meant to be. I lay there for the longest time, feeling and listening.

Morning came and the return to civilization began, but not before one more monumental challenge – the ascent. It was a two-day trek in steep terrain. We were all more fit, the packs were lighter and for me, I too was lighter. We climbed half way up the canyon, the hardest part being the Red Wall. Rising above the sheer cliffs was an accomplishment in itself. We set up our final camp overlooking another beautiful vista. It seemed simple that night. I guess there was another 'letting go', but this time of the Canyon itself, which had been my home for a week. The mix of sadness and accomplishment set the stage for our final ascent.

All of us have had many treks in our lives, some physical and others emotional. My sense is the two are always intertwined. Having a project that challenges and stretches us can be so rewarding. It gives focus and provides for many sweet memories. The Grand Canyon was for me one such challenge. What is yours?

Marie Wall is a Coordinator with the Employee Assistance Program for teachers. For confidential assistance contact Marie Wall (ext. 265) or Claudette Coombs (ext. 242).

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Where There's Smoke There's Fire!

The Rumours Were True

by BEVERLEY PARK & RENÉ WICKS

"... we should continue to advocate for the revitalization of the Professional Development Alliance. While it was functional, this interagency group ... developed a teacher-centered model for professional development that was applauded nationwide."

At the March 2006 Joint Council meeting, Branch Presidents from every region of the province and NLTA's elected Executive turned their attention to professional development... identified as one of the top priorities for this round of collective bargaining. Rumours abound about the sorry state of affairs – the lack of release time, poor choice or no choice, and other issues. To get an accurate view of the professional development landscape, Joint Council delegates completed individual surveys and participated in focused discussion groups. Results revealed that these "rumours" are not just the rumblings of a few disenchanted individuals in some isolated circumstances. In fact, the concerns are real, and they are pervasive.

They can be best summarized by saying that we, as professionals, seem to have lost almost all autonomy when it comes to determining our own professional development agenda. This is in sharp contrast to the professional development model, founded on individual professional choice, which was widely endorsed by an alliance of all educational partners just three short years ago.

We were all encouraged when three of the five days added to the school year were guaranteed for professional development. We weren't counting on the fact that this might be the only professional development we would get! Furthermore, we hadn't expected that these days would be used almost exclusively for the Department of Education and school district agendas devoted to such things as the school development process, the inservicing of new curriculum and training in the preparation of ISSPs. While these are important, the use of school-based closeouts or district conferences, held to comply with the guarantee for professional development have, for the most part, offered very little teacher choice. By and large, these sessions respond to the needs of "the system" and of the school but ignore the fact that teachers, as professionals, may have personal professional development needs that are complementary to, but not identical to, those identified at the school and the district.

Some of our Branch Presidents told us that in the last round of restructuring, some of the positive practices consistent with the Professional Development Alliance model were lost. Prior to that, some districts had made significant advances in having teacher personal growth plans supported by district offerings which were timely and relevant. Furthermore, individual teachers could identify professional development opportunities and apply for leave with some degree of confidence that it would be granted. This is *not* the case today as leave requests for professional development must compete with other legitimate requests ranging from family leave to attend to an ill child or leave to accompany a group of students. So, where does that leave us?

How do we reassert our right to choose? Clearly, the best answer would be a reinstatement of designated substitute teacher time for professional development, allowing flexibility for individuals to access personal professional interests. We can also strive to attain guarantees of teacher professional development in our collective agreement, as well as recognition for approved professional development other than university credits.

Currently, NLTA is restructuring its Special Interest Councils. Effective September 2006, there will be three levels-based councils – Primary/Elementary, Intermediate and Senior High School – and every teacher in the province will automatically be a member of one of those. These councils, along with other specialized councils, will have a mandate to work closely with districts and the Department of Education in ensuring the delivery of relevant professional development which is identified and designed by teachers for teachers. This is the grassroots piece that is missing, the piece that NLTA's Special Interest Councils had provided for years prior to board restructuring.

On the larger scene, we should continue to advocate for the revitalization of the Professional Development Alliance. While it was functional, this interagency group, which included NLTA, the Department of Education, Memorial University's Faculty of Education, and school districts, developed a teacher-centered model for professional development that was applauded nationwide.

This is a time of great optimism in education. Let's hope that as we positively address critical issues such as teacher allocations, class size and Pathways, we also address the significant need for the personal professional growth of our educators.

Beverley Park and Rene Wicks are Administrative Officers in the Professional Development Division of the NLTA.

Great News for Teachers and Artists

The Visiting Artist Program Returns

by RENÉ WICKS

It's a wonderful time for arts in education. As I write this I'm still aglow with recent announcements by Premier Danny Williams regarding new funding for the arts. In April we launched the first of three Arts Work conferences for teachers, funded largely through the government's Cultural Connections initiative. Now, I'm pleased to announce that a cherished program that disappeared many years ago, due to lack of funding, is being reinstated!

What is the Visiting Artist Program?
The Visiting Artist Program (VAP) is a new partnership initiative supported by the Cultural Connections Strategy of the Newfoundland and Labrador Department of Education, the Newfoundland and Labrador Teacher's Association, and the Newfoundland and Labrador Arts Council. The VAP will support initiatives to bring the province's artists into schools. Schools can apply for funding to have an artist, group of artists, or arts organization come to the school to do such things as present artists talks, conduct readings, offer performances, lead arts workshops with students, etc.

Who can apply for a VAP grant?
Any teacher in the provincial K-12 system may apply for a VAP grant by making application to the Newfoundland and Labrador Arts Council. The official Visiting Artist Program Application Form is available from the Arts Council office or website (www.nlac.nf.ca), on the Department of Education website (www.ed.gov.nl.ca/edu/) and on the NLTA website (www.nlta.nl.ca). Each grade configuration (K-3, 4-6, 7-9, 10-12) in a school can receive one VAP grant per school year, except teachers or classes with current ArtsSmarts or Learning Through the Arts projects who are not eligible for VAP funding.

What funding is available from the VAP?
The VAP offers a $500 grant to cover the fees of an artist or group of artists. While schools are encouraged to use local artists for VAP projects, specific artistic expertise may not be available in every community. Therefore, the VAP will offer a limited travel subsidy to schools that must bring in an artist from outside their community. This subsidy is to cover travel, per diem and accommodation costs for the artist only. Schools on the island can apply for a travel subsidy of up to $200, and schools in Labrador can apply for up to $500 to support an artist's travel.

What kind of artist can I invite to my school?
Artists include writers, musicians, visual artists, creative craftspeople, theatre artists, dancers, filmmakers, new media artists, and multidisciplinary artists. Groups of artists such as bands or theatre companies can also be supported. Wherever possible the VAP program encourages schools to use artists from their local community.

What does the visiting artist do in the school?
The purpose of the visiting artist is to make it possible for students to have direct personal contact with a practicing, professional artist and be introduced to the artist's professional practice. Being artistic in nature, the visits should provide the opportunity for students to gain a greater understanding of the role and potential of the arts in our society.

Art activities supported by the VAP could include: readings and discussions with writers, performances by theatre or dance troupes, discussions of a visual artist's work and its cultural vision, learning about traditional crafts with an experienced craftsperson, exploring the arts through an artist led workshop, or working with an artist on a web-based project. The VAP is simply about exploring art with an artist.

What happens after I apply?
VAP applications will be accepted on an ongoing basis throughout the school year. There is no deadline, but schools must apply at least two weeks before the artist is due to come to the school. Representatives from the Department of Education, the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association and the Newfoundland and Labrador Arts Council will assess applications.

Where will I find information?
Posters, information sheets, and application forms are being sent to all schools in the province.

I look forward to great and exciting things with the reinstatement of this program. Best wishes to all who participate!

Sharing Our Cultures - À la découverte de nos cultures

by LLOYDETTA QUAICOE

Arabic, Serbo-Croatian, Spanish, Swahili were some of the languages you would have heard at the 7th annual Sharing Our Cultures-À la découverte de nos cultures event which took place at the Delta St. John's on March 19-21. For three days the ballroom was transformed with cultural displays, flags, posters and colourful banners representing 26 world destinations. Students from Makkovik joined their peers from around the world to share their history, music, dances, customs, visual art and language.

In addition to the cultural booths, 12 government departments and community organizations staffed information booths on such issues as multiculturalism, immigration, Canadian citizenship, human rights, and child safety. One of the highlights of the event was the unexpected visit by the Honourable Peter MacKay, Minister of Foreign Affairs and ACOA.

The event started with the official opening ceremonies with over 500 guests in attendance, including representatives from the federal and provincial government, academic institutions and community organizations. Guests were treated to traditional performances from China, Colombia, India and Korea. A video presentation documented the students as they prepared their cultural booths and the ceremonies concluded with a vibrant and spectacular parade, as each group of students displayed a banner, inviting guests to experience cultures of the world.

During the next two days, approximately 2,000 grades 4-12 students and teachers from 22 schools around the province were captivated by the experience. These visiting students had a map indicating their destinations and individual bilingual passports created to stimulate interaction with booth representatives. The passport and map were created by Julian Duarte, the project assistant, who also designed the physical space into separate colour-coordinated continents. The stage in the middle of the room highlighted the effect of journeying around the world.

This year's theme was "peace" and visiting students were given pre-event activities to write about how they could make their world a peaceful place. They brought their thoughts which were placed on the "Peace Wall". At the end of each session, students read a public declaration of peace in unison pledging to embrace diversity and celebrate differences, and to do all they can for peace.

The event provided opportunities for teachers to integrate bilingual and age-grade appropriate activities into their teaching of Social Studies, Religion, Global Issues and other related curriculum areas. In addition, the project facilitated cross-cultural exchange among youth, as well as an understanding and appreciation for the diversity of cultures in our province. It utilized one of the greatest resources in our schools – the knowledge and experiences of our students from diverse cultures.

Carolina Huepa and Julian Duarte from Colombia treat guests to a traditional performance.

The success and sustainability of this project is due to the collaboration that exists among all the stakeholders. The project is guided by an advisory committee and has the financial and in-kind support of several partners including Canadian Heritage, Citizenship and Immigration Canada, NLTA, Department of Education, Eastern School District, Holy Heart High School, Macdonald Drive Junior High School, Prince of Wales Collegiate, MUN and CBC.

The project has expanded to include events in Clarenville and Random Island Academy. As part of an ongoing partnership with the NLTA, teachers can participate throughout the year with their students by accessing the online activities at www.virtualteachercentre.ca/soc.

Lloydetta Quaicoe is the creator and Coordinator of Sharing Our Cultures and a Cross-Cultural Communications consultant. She has been a researcher and advocate for immigrant and refugee school children and youth since 1998. She can be contacted at quaicoe@gmail.com.

the ARTS work

The Arts Work

by RENÉ WICKS

Every now and then you become involved in something that takes on an energy of its own. This was the case with the Arts Work Conference that was held on April 5-7 in St. John's. Whether is was the fabulous rapport that developed within the planning committee, the passion for the arts that so many of us share, or the joy of seeing so many teachers from around the province actively involved in relevant professional development, I knew the adrenalin was flowing! And it wasn't just me. Smiles and enthusiasm were everywhere – every venue was abuzz!

Involving about 240 primary and elementary teachers from around the province the Arts Work Conference began on Wednesday evening at the Inco Centre, with a fabulous keynote by renowned artist Christopher Pratt. In his address, Pratt said that there was nothing in his home or family environment that encouraged him to be an artist. His initial interest in becoming an artist arose from the patience and encouragement of several teachers, without which he would likely have gone on to an entirely different career. What a powerful acknowledgment of the influence caring teachers can have!

During the full two days of the conference over 100 workshops were given by practicing visual artists, dancers, storytellers, musicians, and songwriters. Many of the best-known artists in the province were on the agenda, presenting at venues that included The Rooms, The School of Dance, the CLB Armory, and LSPU Hall. Drawing, printmaking, collage, pastels, watercolour, sculpture, storytelling, mask making, folk dance, music and movement, photo essays, song writing – the sessions were amazing. As well, the NLTA's Music Special Interest Council held sessions for their members, hosting their BGM at The Rooms on Thursday evening.

At the closing ceremony and reception five teachers were recognized for outstanding contribution to the arts in their schools. Nominated by their peers, the recipients of the first Arts Work Educator Awards were Mary Dinn (St. Teresa's School, St. John's), Cathy Best (St. Mary's Elementary, St. John's), Jill Moores (Paradise Elementary, Paradise), Cindy Wheeler (Gill Memorial Academy, Musgrave Harbour), and Donna House-Winsor (Bishop Abraham Elementary, St. John's).

Arts Work Award recipients. l-r: Mary Dinn, Cindy Wheeler, Cathy Best, Jill Moores, and Donna House-Winsor

Teachers practice the art of storytelling at Eleanor Benjamin's session.

This Arts Work Conference was the first in a series, made possible through major funding from the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador's Cultural Connections strategy. Partners included the Department of Education, NLTA, the Eastern School District, Arts Smarts Newfoundland and Labrador, the NLTA Music Council, and The Rooms. Personally, it was a pleasure to work with such great people on the planning committee and I'd like to thank Karen Hewitt (The Rooms), Ken Murphy (Newfoundland and Labrador Arts Council), Cathy Best (St. Mary's Elementary School), Mary Dinn (NLTA Music Council), Krista Vokey (Eastern School District), Anne Burke (Ph.D. Candidate), Leslie Cross (Department of Education), and Jennifer Adams (Logistics Coordinator). Finally, everyone involved, planners and participants, should acknowledge the untiring work of the Conference Chair, Donna Mills (Department of Education), who is already making preliminary plans for next year's event.

Teachers proudly display a mural they created at an Arts Work session.

Announcing the New Visiting Artist Program

The *Visiting Artist Program* will support initiatives to bring the province's art into schools. Teachers can apply for funding to have an artist, group of artists, or arts organization come to the school to present artists talks, conduct readings, offer performances, lead arts workshops with students, etc.

The VAP offers a $500 grant to cover the fees of an artist or group of artists. Depending on the activity planned the VAP grant could, for example, support a single performance of a play, or a visual artist conducting a workshop over two school days. Schools may find other funding sources to support a more extensive project, **but the VAP will not allow students to be charged any fees.** The VAP will also offer a limited travel subsidy to rural schools to bring in an artist from outside their community. **Rural schools on the island can apply for a travel subsidy of up to $200, and schools in Labrador can apply for up to $500 to support an artist's travel.**

Any school in the provincial K-12 system may apply for a VAP grant. Application must be made to the Newfoundland and Labrador Arts Council using the official *Visiting Artist Program* Application Form available from the Arts Council office or website, and on the Department of Education and NLTA websites. **Each grade configuration (K-3, 4-6, 7-9, 10-12) in a school is eligible to receive one VAP grant per school year.** Teachers or classes with current ArtsSmarts or Learning Through the Arts projects are not eligible for VAP funding.

The Visiting Artist Program is supported by:

Department of Education

NLTA

Newfoundland and Labrador Arts Council

Direct questions and submit completed application to:

Ken Murphy, Program Manager
Newfoundland and Labrador Arts Council
P.O. Box 98 (1 Springdale Street)
St. John's, NL A1C 5H5
Tel: 726-2212 or toll free long distance 1 866 726-2212
Fax: (709) 726-0619
kmurphy@nfld.net
www.nlac.nf.ca for applications online

Morphing Into a New Way of Thinking

by ERIC NIPPARD

This is a story of biology, technology, and professional development. I can see the puzzled looks on your faces as you try to negotiate that opening line and reconcile the connection between the three. Let's start with the technology!

I have a room in my house that is truly mine. It is an office that is tucked away in the lower level of the house, but it is safe from the decorating frenzies of my wife, and the rules of order for the remainder of our home. I have domain in that one small section. Actually, the kitchen is mine too, and I *do* help with the domestic duties in the other parts. This space though, is mine. I am surrounded by my books, research articles, and products of technology. I come here to think, work, correct homework, fly the occasional A-319 trip to Jamaica (virtually), drink the occasional Guinness or single malt, listen to music, and … well, you get the drift.

"Squids morph for reasons of survival, which I guess is not that far of a stretch from our experience as teachers. Like our students, we need freshness, new ideas, invigorating discussion, and a challenge to keep ourselves at the top of our game."

My wife, for the most part, steers clear. Not because of the ownership issue, nor the mess (I like to think of it as organized clutter). But until recently, because of one of the items in that room. It's not what you're thinking! It was my computer. My wife had (note the tense) a healthy distrust of all that was "computer", and graced the room with her presence only when she needed a list of items typed, or wished to view pictures of our grand-daughter in my e-mail folders. Until recently that is. The change in interest developed when she wandered in one afternoon and found me talking to our son, who happens to live in Washington, using MSN video-conferencing. Now, in and of itself, this is not such an earth-shattering event. But you see, he was showing me the sights of the city of Seattle while traveling to work on the bus. His morning commute had turned into a virtual tour! No need to get into the details of how this was happening as it is fairly commonplace. To my wife, it was astounding. HOW are you doing that? WHAT is he using? His computer? WOW! And she was hooked. She now wishes to know more about the capabilities of this device and of course, I am happy to oblige. I consider it a privilege to assist her in learning more. What's important is that this seemingly small incident sparked a desire to get acquainted with something that she once feared. Now, she is even talking about ways of using this in her classroom. Quite a breakthrough if you ask me!

Okay. Flash back to the biology. So far, the thread of connection between the three themes is fairly vague (or non-existent). The aforementioned biology component is due to an article that sparked my interest in a recent issue of *Discover*© magazine. Most of magazine's writings are thought provoking, but one in particular sparked my curiosity and interest. It discussed the life of cephalopods (known by epicureans as calamari), specifically their ability to morph at will into objects that exist in their environment, to change colour, camouflage themselves, make themselves look like rocks, and a variety of other tricks. For an organism at the relative bottom rung of the classes, this is one *smart* beastie!

The point of the article was to compare the morphing abilities with the communication limitations of humans. (read more in April 2006 issue, *Jaron's World, Why Not Morph? What Cephalopods Can Teach Us About Language*. Jaron Lanier, p. 26-27). But it was a quote at the end of the article that *really* got me to thinking, especially in light of my wife's recent desire to initiate some professional development. And I quote: "We humans think a lot of ourselves

as a species; we have a tendency to suppose that the way we think is the only way to think. Maybe we need to think again".

Take a couple of moments and reflect on that last statement. It is, without a doubt, a stark reminder of how we sometimes approach our own thinking and learning, or our own professional development. We tend to get caught up in doing things "like we have always done them". Times change, and, as in the case of my wife, sometimes it takes a shocking or exciting discovery to prod us into wanting to learn more, to morph, or to undergo some sort of change. By our very nature we are resistant to change, but it is often the very thing that can recharge our batteries, and our zest for this profession.

Squids morph for reasons of survival, which I guess is not that far of a stretch from our experience as teachers. Like our students, we need freshness, new ideas, invigorating discussion, and a challenge to keep ourselves at the top of our game. Ask yourself the following question: "When was the last time I really became excited about something new in my subject area?" Sit back and think about this. We, too, need to morph and change periodically. Examine your own PD needs. Start small. It could, and probably will, lead to bigger and better things. Change is a good thing. Hey! My wife has requested her own e-mail address. I didn't see it coming!

Eric Nippard is a Technology Education teacher with the Center for Distance Learning and Innovation (CDLI) in Stephenville. He is also President of the Technology Educators Special Interest Council (TESIC).

Update from ACT

Smoke-Free School Grounds

by KEVIN COADY

"Be it resolved that the NLMA calls on all regional education boards and the Departments of Health and Community Services and Education to implement no-smoking policies on the properties of all K-12 schools in Newfoundland and Labrador effective September, 2006."

At its 2005 AGM, the Newfoundland and Labrador Medical Association (NLMA) unanimously passed the above motion and since that time there has been significant discussion and consideration surrounding the issue of Smoke-Free School Grounds. Following an Action Plan established by its Smoke-Free School Communities' Committee, the Newfoundland and Labrador Alliance for the Control of Tobacco (ACT) has held meetings with the executive of the Federation of School Councils, the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association, the Newfoundland and Labrador School Boards' Association (NLSBA) and the Directors and Assistant Directors of each school district. These meetings were held with the specific goal of sharing data collected in a May 2005 survey of administrators where 94.2% of the 259 principals who completed the survey said the Provincial Government should legislate a ban on smoking on all school grounds. The fact that only 6.1% of respondents in an April 2005 survey of the general public supported the presence of smoking areas on school grounds was also shared with those in attendance. At these meetings participants were asked to consider showing support for the administrators in the schools and the general public by calling on Government to implement a Provincial Policy as called for in the NLMA's motion and all agreed to seriously consider the request.

In the weeks and months following these meetings decisions were made by different groups to support the move towards smoke-free school grounds. The Executive of the Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of School Councils wrote the Premier indicating it was supporting those working to bring about smoke-free school communities and calling upon the Government to provide resources to have smoke-free school communities all across the province. In addition to this there was support from the NLTA who wrote Minister Burke indicating that the NLTA endorses the position of ACT in calling for a ban on smoking on all school grounds. Support was also expressed by the NLSBA which in February unanimously carried a motion calling on all Newfoundland and Labrador School Boards to consider implementing smoke-free policies on all School Board grounds and properties.

With support for smoke-free school grounds expressed so clearly in the April and May surveys, it obviously became clear to School Districts that it was time to seriously study the issue. As a result of this, the Labrador School District implemented a policy on January 30, 2006 which said that no person shall be permitted to smoke on K-12 school property or work sites. Following this, the Nova Central District approved a ban for September 2006. Since the Francophone District also has a policy in place, only two Districts remain who have yet to approve a policy and both of these are actively reviewing the issue at this time. Indications are that in the near future both will join the others in banning smoking on school grounds.

Realizing that School Districts were preparing for smoke-free school grounds, the Alliance for the Control of Tobacco has made a concerted effort throughout this school year to provide information and resources for schools throughout the province. Since October, ACT has sent resources to every K-12 student and teacher in every school in the province. *You're A Target – Don't Let 'Em Get You* resources were sent to every grade 7-12 teacher and student while *Smoking Poisons You* (*S.P.Y.*) resources were given to every grade 4, 5 and 6 student and teacher in the province. So as not to forget the K-3's, ACT sent *Digit's Clean-Air Adventure Colouring and Activity Book* to every K-3 student and teacher. In addition to specific resources for each teacher and student, schools received posters, smoke-free property signs, *Science and You* workbooks/CD, Activist Toolkit Facilitator's Guide/CD, etc. All of this material was complemented with special sections on our website,

www.smokingsucks.ca, dedicated to *You're A Target* and *S.P.Y.* These sections included contests where students could win prizes and actively solve puzzles, etc., while learning why it is important to be tobacco free. Ads on TV, radio and in the cinemas also helped deliver the smoke-free message to students and the general public. At present, ACT's campaign includes TV and radio ads with the *Enjoy Smoke-Free Newfoundland and Labrador* message. It is hoped that these ads will encourage people to embrace and support the idea of smoke-free public places including school grounds. ACT hopes to be able to embark on a new campaign at the start of the new school year which will support the Smoke-Free School Grounds Policies being implemented by the School Districts.

In an attempt to lend further support to the School Districts on this issue, ACT partnered with the Department of Health and the Department of Education in hosting a workshop on April 24, 2006 for nine schools representing all the School Districts in the province. At this workshop three presenters from New Brunswick shared their stories of how Hampton High School and other schools in New Brunswick successfully implemented smoke-free policies. The administrator, teacher and three students from each of the nine schools and other education stakeholders were given the opportunity to explore ways to move on this issue while discussing strategies which might or might not work. As a follow up to this workshop, ACT is preparing a CD which includes observations made by the teachers at Hampton High as they began the process of implementing a smoke-free policy. A copy of this CD will be sent to each school in the province. Hopefully this CD will generate some ideas for teachers in the schools throughout the province. In addition to the CD, ACT is working with The Smokers' Helpline to get referral kits to every guidance counselor in our schools so that counselors can direct students to the Helpline if they want help with quitting when their school grounds become smoke-free. Included with this referral kit will be a directory listing help which is available for those who want to quit smoking.

ACT hopes that just as School Boards are showing support for the administrators who want to make their schoolyards smoke-free, the Minister of Education and the Government will now consider supporting the District Offices' move to implement a policy and in so doing, lend further support to the administrators in our schools. ACT has provided the Minister with the survey results and the letters of support and has requested a meeting with the Minister to recommend a provincial policy which would support the individual Board policies. It is ACT's hope that our province will join the list of provinces which currently have Government legislated bans. Currently in Canada, five provinces have Smoke-Free Acts which ban smoking on all school grounds and a sixth province has a Smoke-Free Act which prohibits youth from possessing tobacco in any public place, including school grounds. In the other provinces, as in ours, there are some School Board policies but no Government policy.

At this time I want to thank all the teachers in the province, District Office staff, and officials at the Departments of Education and Health for their support throughout the year. Without your help ACT would not have been able to get the valuable resource materials into the hands of the students and necessary surveys would not have been completed. I hope I can count on your continued support and assure you that you can contact ACT at any time for any assistance which we might be able to give you. ACT will continue to work to find ways to promote smoke-free as the best choice for everyone in our province.

Kevin Coady is Executive Director of the Newfoundland and Labrador Alliance for the Control of Tobacco (ACT).

ONSITE '06

August 10-16, 2006

Gros Morne National Park. ONSITE '06 is a week-long professional development opportunity for teachers led by Parks Canada staff and facilitated by representatives of the Department of Education and the NLTA. Explore and experience the habitats and ecosystems of Newfoundland's natural environment. Visit local communities and cultural events and understand the interdependence of our culture and communities with the environment. Engage in group discussions, collaborate with colleagues, make solid connections to the school curriculum, and explore possibilities for lesson plans and learning resources. Participants will: explore the unique landscape of the Tablelands; learn the history of this place at the Gros Morne Theatre Festival; discover a marine food chain; use the natural environment to inspire poetry; discover art and music inspired by our landscape; see a landscape shaped by ice; sample the biodiversity of a stream; observe adaptations to our environment; and understand ecological interactions between moose and the forest. Registration: $375 per person. (Includes meals, accommodations at local motels, and travel during the Institute. Please contact your Assistant Director, Programs for potential funding.) For information contact Education Specialist, Parks Canada, Tel: 709-458-2417, Fax: 709-458-2059, Email: rob.hingston@pc.gc.ca.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SESSIONS

August 2006

Memorial University, St. John's. Practical Classroom Management Consulting will be offering two professional development sessions in Room 1043 of the Arts Annex at MUN, from 9 am to 3:30 pm each day. On August 14, a one-day session on "Meeting a Wide Range of Learners in your Classroom" will focus on strategies teachers can use in their classrooms to deal with a wide assortment of learning needs, especially struggling learners. Cost: $75. A two-day session on August 15 and 16 on "Classroom Discipline Techniques" will focus on ways to prevent discipline infractions from occurring, as well as addressing minor and major disruptions. Cost: $125. For information and to register on-line contact www.practicalclassrooms.ca, or send contact information and payment (made out to PCMC) to PCMC c/o Chris Boulter RR#2, Pictou, NS, B0K 1H0. For further information contact chris@practicalclassrooms.ca.

NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON LEARNING DISABILITIES CALL FOR PAPERS

September 30, 2006 (submission deadline)

The 16th National Conference on Learning Disabilities, hosted by the Learning Disabilities Association of Newfoundland and Labrador, will be held on September 27-29, 2007 at the Delta St. John's Hotel. The Program Committee invites proposals for sessions related to learning disabilities to be delivered as part of the conference program. For information contact the Learning Disabilities Association of Newfoundland and Labrador, Tel: 709-753-1445, debbie.ldanl@nl.rogers.com.

COSS WORKSHOPS

Fall 2006

September 14 – Mount Peyton Hotel, Grand Falls-Windsor; September 15, Airport Inn, St. John's. **Teaching in the Mixed Ability Classroom: Brain Biology and the Layered Curriculum**. Featuring Dr. Kathie Nunley. This workshop begins with an entertaining and humorous look into current brain research. The second half focuses on solutions for meeting the needs of diverse learners in today's inclusive classroom. For information contact Keith Adey, Tel: 709-292-5727.

October 16-17 – Grand Falls-Windsor. **Anger Management/De-escalation (Train-the-Trainer)**. Participants will learn practical verbal and physical intervention techniques of de-escalating potentially violent situations. October 18-19 – Grand Falls-Windsor. **Bullying Stops When Respect Begins (Train-the-Trainer)**. Participants will learn strategies to help address the issue of bullying in schools. For more information, visit www.keystosaferschools.com or see the February 2006 COSS newsletter.

NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR COUNSELLORS' AND PSYCHOLOGISTS' ASSOCIATION (NLCPA) ANNUAL FALL CONFERENCE AND AGM

October 18-20, 2006

Battery Hotel, St. John's. A block of rooms have been reserved for the conference (Tel: 1-800-563-8181). Full Conference Sessions and Concurrent Sessions will be offered.

Wednesday evening: Registration and Meet & Greet. Thursday's Workshop: Mr. Gary Direnfeld, "The Effects of Children Witnessing Domestic Violence and Implications for Counsellors Working With Them" (www.yoursocialworker.com). Thursday evening: Hon. Joan Burke and other invited guests – Open Forum to address issues in counselling and school psychology. Friday's Workshop: Mr. Gerry Dooley, "Self-Mutilation" (www.gerrydooley.com). Concurrent sessions also scheduled for Friday.

For further information contact Tom George, Vice President NLCPA: tom.george@wnlsd.ca, Tel: 709-643-9525 ext 12.

Dates to Remember

June 2006

June 2-3 NLTA Executive Meeting

June 15 **Deadline:** Notification by board of acceptance/rejection of Deferred Salary Leave requests

July 2006

July 31 **Deadline:** NLTA Scholarship Applications